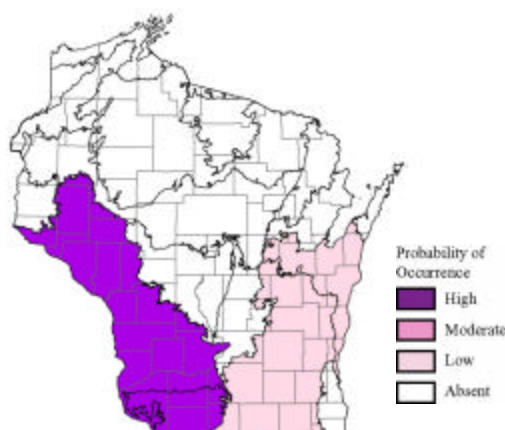


## Blanchard's Cricket Frog (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*)

### Species Assessment Scores\*

State rarity:	5
State threats:	4
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	1
Global distribution:	3
Global threats:	3.5
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	3.6
Area of importance:	2

\* Please see the [Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries \(Section 3.1.1\)](#) for definitions of criteria and scores.



### Ecological Landscape Associations

Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

### Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Lake Michigan Coastal	Warmwater rivers
Southwest Savanna	Coldwater streams
Southwest Savanna	Coolwater streams
Southwest Savanna	Warmwater streams
Western Coulee and Ridges	Coldwater streams
Western Coulee and Ridges	Coolwater streams
Western Coulee and Ridges	Emergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern sedge meadow
Western Coulee and Ridges	Submergent marsh
Western Coulee and Ridges	Warmwater rivers
Western Coulee and Ridges	Wet prairie

### Threats and Issues

- Research is ongoing to determine the potential impacts of climate on the decline of cricket frogs at the northern fringe of their range. Most experts feel the decline is at least partially attributable to harsh winters (extreme cold and little snow fall) from the 1950's through the mid-1980's, coupled with land use changes that prevent recolonization of ponds and normal metapopulation interactions.
- Agricultural run-off causing turbidity, eutrophication and sedimentation degrades habitat for this species.
- Natural succession to a more closed canopy forest appears to reduce or eliminate this species.
- Shoreline development degrades or eliminates habitat for this species.
- Moderate to intensive grazing can cause extensive shoreline disturbance and impact turbidity.
- Alterations of aquatic habitats may favor increasing pathogen (trematodes) vectors such as snails, resulting in an increased incidence of malformations, potentially affecting recruitment rates.
- Possible bullfrog predation in areas where it has been introduced or has invaded.

- Cricket frogs, being generally restricted to aquatic habitats, may be especially sensitive to pollutants entering the water. Runoff of pesticides, like atrazine, may threaten frogs directly by killing eggs, larvae, or adults. Indirect effects of pesticides may include alterations in behavior (frogs are less able to escape predators) and changes in the food base (invertebrates are killed by pesticides). Contaminants may also alter sex ratios of amphibians, resulting in reduced reproductive success.
- Poor water quality in general (e.g., low dissolved oxygen) may be a limiting factor for cricket frogs, which seem to be especially sensitive to this.
- Water quality and disease factors are thought to be causing malformations, and may be affecting reproductive success.
- A variety of pollution problems may be factors, including mercury, acid rain, salt, and nutrient loading (especially nitrates).
- A short life span and limited dispersal capability may make this species more vulnerable to local extinctions.

#### **Priority Conservation Actions**

- Long term monitoring is needed to evaluate population status and track trends of representative populations. The annual frog and toad survey is not sufficient.
- Preserve habitat for known populations through long term land protection.
- Implement streambank protection programs to restore and insure long-term maintenance of bank buffers.
- Work with Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Wetlands Reserve Program and other landowner incentive programs to restore and create wetlands (ponds) along occupied stream corridors to increase breeding habitat.
- Reintroductions may be appropriate following habitat restoration or creation.
- Wildlife habitat in general is poorly represented in zoning and planning, and major strides are needed in policy and education here. This is especially important for this short-lived species, which may need functional landscape connectivity intact to preserve metapopulation interactions..
- Continued research on grazing and impacts of other farming practices is needed to achieve more ecologically sound farming practices.
- Research is needed to better understand specific life history parameters, such as identifying the microhabitats used for overwintering, to determine how metapopulation dynamics may be influencing the distribution and status of this species in Wisconsin, and to help us understand the causes of declines.
- Education and outreach efforts, focused on landowners and farmers living where the frogs occur, are needed to improve the long-term sustainability of populations.